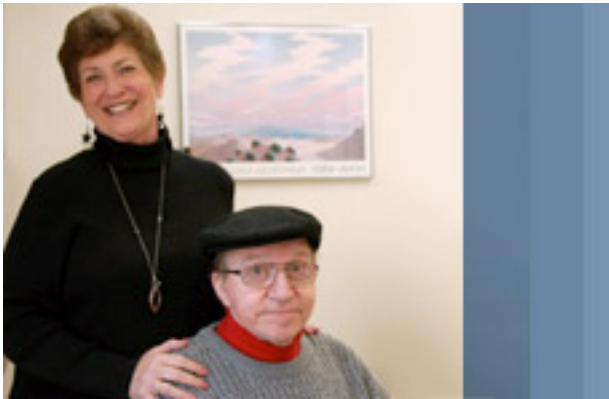


## Diagnosis Provides a Way Forward

By admin

Created 01/12/2010 - 20:54



When Mr. Larson (assumed name) and his wife came to the UCD-Martinez Center he was in his middle 50s and had held a prestigious upper management job until he was dismissed for poor job performance some months previously. His primary care doctor had arranged for him to be evaluated by a community neurologist, and that doctor sent him on to see a psychiatrist. At the time he came to the Center he was being treated for depression.

After a multidisciplinary evaluation the CADC diagnosed vascular dementia. That diagnosis helped to change their lives for the better in many ways, not because the disease could be reversed, but because now all of those concerned understood what they were dealing with and could make better decisions about how to handle it. Having this diagnosis allowed him to file for disability with his work and Social Security. The Center recommended that he stop taking the anti-depressant medications, which had not been helpful, and instead focused on helping his wife understand his condition.

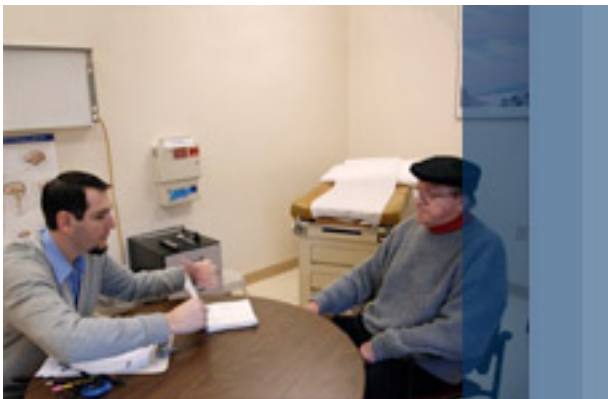
"The clinicians here are so much more knowledgeable than our primary care physicians. The PCP is not able to give us specific information about his dementia. At the clinic, we see so many specialists that know exactly how to explain his disease in a way that I can understand."

Knowing how his condition affected his thinking and behavior helped his wife to be more understanding with him. Because of how the condition had affected his brain, Mr. Larson had become profoundly apathetic. Previously a very active, energetic man he now would sit and do nothing, he cared about almost nothing and showed no interest in activities.

"Every year I enjoy coming and feel better after I leave. The clinicians helped me to have empathy for my husband when I was feeling frustrated with some of his behaviors. For example, the nurse explained to me that it may be just as difficult for Jim to cross the street as it would be for me to run a mile. I've learned to be more patient and accepting that his different behaviors are due to his illness and not because he is trying to be difficult."

Knowing how to manage his problems helped the whole family:

"I even brought my mother to a clinic visit once to help her understand Jim's behaviors so that she could be less critical of him."



[Read more](#) [1]

- [caring](#)
- [educating](#)
- [expertise](#)

**Source URL:** <http://cadc.ucsf.edu/cadc/stories/diagnosis1>

### Links:

[1] <http://cadc.ucsf.edu/cadc/cadc/stories/diagnosis1>